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"What fools these Mortals be!"
MIDSUMMER-NIGHTS DREAM.

Suck

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WAITING FOR EACH OTHER'S DEATH.

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UNDER THE ARTISTIC CHARGE OF JOS. KEPPLER
BUSINESS MANAGER A. SCHWARZMANN
EDITOR H. C. BUNNER

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FICTION.

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION CONTAINING ONLY STORIES.

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No. 17 contains "A Daughter's Vow," a story of intense power and romantic interest; "A Piazza Victory," by Arthur Lot, an ingeniously amusing tale; the second part of "A Little Incident in the Southwest," which closes this fine dramatic sketch; also the second and final installment of Mr. Townsend Percy's "A Fair Amateur," the climax of which is unexpectedly powerful and unconventional. The number is finished with three more chapters of "Bent, Not Broken," in which the interest is sustained by the clever and faithful delineation of life in one of America's greatest colleges. A new novel, by the author of "Jeanne," dealing, unlike its predecessor, with phases of high life in New York, is announced to begin in the Christmas number, where other attractions are promised.

PUCK'S ANNUAL

FOR 1882

will be given, in the first week in January, to its millions of prospective readers.

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PUCKOGRAPH No. 8,

BY

JOSEPH KEPPLER,

which accompanies this number as a gratuitous supplement, is that of

ADELINA PATTI,
THE EVERLASTING PRIMA-DONNA.

CONTENTS:

CARTOONS AND COMMENTS.

PUCK'S Prize Christmas Stories.

PUCKERINGS.

Chanson du Grand Cocher—poem—Retttop.

Mr. Smith's Clock—R. K. Munkittrick.

A Delicate Question of Taste—illustrated.

A Crepuscular Reverie—R. K. M.

One Peculiarity of the Holiday Season—illustrated.

A "Chili" Reception—illustrated.

His Contribution.

"One Having Authority"—John Dixwell, M.D.

FITZNOODLE IN AMERICA—No. CCIII.

Disappointed—illustrated.

ANSWERS FOR THE ANXIOUS.

An Aspirant—Ruff Daubs.

Rhymes for Book Buyers.

AMUSEMENTS.

Probable—illustrated.

The Joshua of It—poem—Slowcus.

LITERARY NOTES.

MARRIED MISERIES—No. XXIII.—Arthur Lot.

PUCK'S EXCHANGES.

CARTOONS AND COMMENTS.

FOR a dramatically effective exit, commend us to that of Mr. James G. Blaine. He goes out of office as a well-directed boomerang leaves the thrower's hand, only to return with redoubled force. He steps gracefully out of a cabinet position, and in a delicate way the country is given to understand that he means to have a cabinet of his own in 1884—or rather in 1885. His ambition in '84 is the control of a convention. And there is no denying the fact that Mr. Blaine's chances are, as political chances go, very good. He has not

an absolutely unblemished record, and few people believe that the sole motive of his life has been an unselfish patriotism; but he is a man of wonderful tact and cleverness, and he has a faculty for making friends—and not simply friends in a limited personal sense, either—which amounts to a genius. If brains ever made a man President of the United States, brains will make Mr. Blaine President. He has set his heart upon that dignity, and nothing but death, a miracle or a sunstroke will keep him from it.

* * *

There are two or three miracles which we would gladly see worked in this country. There is that great miracle, which always seems near at hand, yet which never seems nearer—the miracle of a great popular awakening to a healthy political life. We have looked for it, we have worked for it, we have predicted it; yet it lingers in the darkness of a doubtful future. With excellent and well-established institutions; with clever men enough and honest men enough, all allowed fair scope for their powers and their virtues, with a prosperous and peaceful country, America endures a Government that is a disgrace to modern civilization. We see corruption and mismanagement in office all about us; we find these things accepted as matters of course, winked at, laughed at, and overlooked. And we submit to it all. Is it not a disgrace indeed, that we should talk about electing to the highest office in the nation a man of whom an honest, unprejudiced and unbiased journal has to say that although he is clever and strong, "he has not an absolutely unblemished record"? An absolutely unblemished record! Why, a statesman's record should be as unblemished as a woman's should be. And yet it is very possible that we shall find the man of whom this is said the very best man whom it is possible to put at the head of our Government in 1884. Is it not time for a miracle?

* * *

Mr. Blaine has seen fit to go down South to enlarge his circle of acquaintances, and we trust he will not find in the Southern heart that obdurate silver churn which can alone resist his genial magnetism. But politics in the South are queer—very queer. Save in Virginia, where there is a financial bone to be quarreled over, all through the Southern States there is a most ridiculous fighting of extinct Satans. For several years the two parties there fought over the dead issues of the war. Now they are fighting over the dead issues of *that* fight. It is a battle now between the children of the "unreconstructed" and the ghosts of the carpet-baggers. A more absurd fight was never waged. The Count de Chambord is a lively and important factor in French politics, if he be compared with the men who are throwing away their votes, their energy, and their enthusiasm, down South, keeping up a battle so futile, so utterly unproductive of any results, that the very vultures have flown from the field in disgusted despair. The two parties are merely struggling each to outlive the other, and Death has already laid an equal hand on each. If Mr. Blaine goes among these people and makes his arrangements to give them something to fight for, three years hence, he will have done a good work.

* * *

Why do so many people make this awful fuss about Christmas? Certainly not because it is a Christian festival, for it has now little religious significance in this country. That feature has long been lost sight of, and Christmas means, to most men, a heavy drain on their purses for presents; and to children, unlimited eating of indigestible things which often leave the seeds of chronic dyspepsia in their little systems.

The part that woman plays in this joyous season is too important to be disposed of in a few words. She absolutely pervades everything, and is not to be shaken off. Indeed, Christmas seems as if it were instituted solely for her benefit.

* * *

Why it is Christmas, and what it is for, are matters of no consequence to her. Sufficient that Christmas is here, and that she must sally forth and spend all the money she can lay her hands on in buying gifts, and wasting dollars on useless things—money which, if used in a rational manner during the whole year, would purchase infinitely more comfort, greater satisfaction, and full value, which is never to be got at this time. Your house is flooded with circulars of tradesmen who seem to have gone specially into the Christmas business for the purpose of obtaining a share of the money that they know you will be coerced into spending.

* * *

It is at this season that your wife reads all these circulars and all the advertisements, and seems determined to buy something at every store that advertises holiday goods. There is positively no getting away from it; the Christmas traps are set, and when they are once approached, you are lost. It is best to quietly submit, and to endeavor to delude yourself into the belief that Christmas is, after all, a very fine institution. In the end it will be better for your peace of mind; and after you or your wife, for it is the same thing, have bought heaps of all kinds of unnecessary rubbish from loud-mouthed vendors who reap their harvest by their knowledge of the Christmas weakness of humanity, you may console yourself with the thought that you are only one fool amongst many.

* * *

If it is true that Mr. Daniel Drew Chamberlain was kidnapped on Wednesday of last week, there is urgent need of a revision of our insanity laws. Novelists and dramatists have exhausted their talents in picturing and describing such cases, but it is rarely that so barefaced an instance as this is brought before the public. It seems as if a republic is no guarantee for the personal liberty of its citizens, and that those who live under monarchical government receive more protection than we can get from our own officers of the law. We have not forgotten the disgraceful proceedings in the Esposito case, and nothing has yet been done to prevent a recurrence of the outrage. There is too much desire on the part of officials, under cover of forms of law, to exceed their duty and trample on the rights of citizens.

* * *

Adelina Patti was not as extensively advertised as was Sarah Bernhardt, but it seems highly probable that she will leave these shores with quite as bulky a bag of dollars; for, in her way, she is a much greater artist than the clever, but not brilliant Sadie, and the American people do know what is really good. Adelina Patti, whose Puckograph we present as a Christmas gift to the readers of PUCK, has learnt a great deal since she left these shores some twenty years ago. But she has not learnt everything. She has, or rather had not learnt that Americans are not such fools as some people take them for, at least not to the extent of paying \$10.00 a head to hear a fine voice but a very inferior concert. She paid a small price for her experience, but she bought it just in time, and now, under the guidance of Mr. Abbey, her tour through the country promises to be in every sense a triumph. By the present scale of prices nearly everybody has now the opportunity of enjoying warbling that has certainly never been equaled in this generation.

PUCK'S PRIZE CHRISTMAS STORIES.

With our usual profuse liberality, we offered several prizes for Christmas stories. Of the many thousands received, we have awarded the first three premiums to the authors of the following touching narratives. We refrain from mentioning their names, as the proverbial modesty which characterizes us induced us to organize the literary tournament secretly, without in any way advertising the fact.

FIRST PRIZE—TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

TEDDY'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

The whirling snow danced wildly and merrily over the house-tops of the weird, uncompromising, ghostly and ghastly city; for it was Christmas eve, and the streets were white and deep with the sparkling, glistening and evanescent crystals of Nature. The full moon shed her effulgence considerably over the scene, and especially over a portly philanthropist, who, attired in a sealskin ulster, new arctics, and with a solitaire diamond stud in his shirt-collar, strode along the pallid highway of Grand Street. There was a kindly look in his fishy eye as it fell on a poor innocent little boy who was picturesquely clad in a tattered linen duster and was making a frugal meal off a neglected snowball, washing down the viand with ice ravished from the sidewalk.

"Do you know that it is Christmas eve, sonny?" said the portly gentleman.

"Never heard of such a thing, boss, and my name is not sonny, it is Teddy."

"What are you eating, Teddy?"

"Snowball, boss."

"It is cold stuff, is it not, Teddy?"

"It is, boss."

"How would you like to come to my palatial mansion on Fifth Avenue and revel in all the delicacies of the season? Will you go?"

"You bet, boss."

Teddy accompanied his benefactor to his gorgeous residence, and sat down to dinner. For the first time in his life he ate roast turkey, *pâté de foie gras*, *omelette à la financière*, little gem peas, mince-pie, plum-pudding, *Charlotte Russe*, *meringues*, truffles, pound-cake, tabasco pepper-sauce, Limburger cheese, terrapin stew, mulligatawny soup, custard-pie and salmon with oyster-sauce, in the order above mentioned. He drank Pommard, Mummersiek's champagne and Old Crow whiskey.

"Do you feel ill, Teddy?" asked the portly philanthropist, as the poor boy lay in the comfortable hospital ward.

"I do, kinder, boss," and the gentle youthful spirit passed away.

SECOND PRIZE—ONE BAG SELF-RAISING FLOUR.

LITTLE SAMUEL'S SACRIFICE.

Little Samuel was a very good little boy, and he lived in a New England town, where they ate pie and went to church three times every Sunday.

Little Samuel was not like other little boys, who were very often bad and rude.

When his naughty comrades hit him in the eye, little Samuel never hit them back. He turned away their wrath with the softest answer he had learned at Sunday-school, and went and told the teacher on them.

Then he stood by while they were larruped, and when the op'er-a-tion was over, he told them that it was for their good.

When Christmas time came around, little Samuel felt that he must do something to be a little ex-tra good. Unfortunately, he had no invalid mother, or consumptive little sister to take care of and make sac-ri-fices for, so he thought he would save up all his pennies and give them to the Heathen.

He wanted very much to buy a new sled, and he owed a bill at the Candy Em-por-i-um; but he determined to save up and give all his money to the Heathen.

This was a sac-ri-fice for little Samuel. Perhaps it was not a great sac-ri-fice; but it was a first-class sac-ri-fice for a small boy. And when little Samuel had saved up all his money and had made up two dollars and twenty-seven cents, he gave it to the Su-per-in-ten-dent of the Sunday-School for the Heathen.

But the Su-per-in-ten-dent of the Sunday-School was also a Bank-Cashier.

And he went to Europe for his health on the day before Christmas.

And he took little Samuel's two dollars and twenty-seven cents along with him.

And little Samuel said a bad word. And his moral nature was permanently warped, and when he grew up he became a Pi-rate.

THIRD PRIZE—ONE THOUSAND DOLLAR BOND (CONFEDERATE).

ONLY A BOARDING-HOUSE KEEPER'S DAUGHTER.

She sat in the parlor of the boarding-house, and the dark shadows mustered around her as she leaned her head upon her graceful fingers. Time had paled her delicate beauty; she was no longer in the first blushing dawn of her youth, for she was forty-seven. Twenty-three years had rolled away since her sailor lover, Ben Bobstay, had left her on Christmas eve for the purpose of sailing on the briny deep. Now there was another Christmas eve—would he return?

A heavy, rollicking step in the hall, and in another moment Ben Bobstay was in the room.

"My darling Ben!" exclaimed our heroine.

"Avast there," said Ben: "what cheer, shipmate?"

"Don't you know me, Ben? I am your own Sadie."

"Swamp my toplights, I think I do remember seeing you before. Lemme see—was it in my China cruise or in the Pacific?"

"Ben, it cannot be possible that you have forgotten that we are brothed, and that you are to marry me and—"

"Belay there, my beauty. All right, I'm willin', if you are; but it won't be plain sailing. You see, the hard work at sea knocked you clean out of my memory, and I've got one wife in Hong Kong, another in Melbourne, and three or four more knocking about in Algoa Bay, Batavia and Rio de Janeiro. If you like to come along and take your chances, I am yours."

And this was Sadie's Christmas eve.

FOURTH PRIZE—A PIECE OF PIE.

THE PIE EATER FROM AROOSTOOK.

Philip Thompson was born and raised in a farmhouse in Aroostook—one of these flat buildings that look like Washington's Headquarters and cover half an acre, have all the rooms on the ground floor, and a great white hall sprinkled between.

Philip Thompson was haughty, but still he ate pie with the keen relish that an ostrich knows while devouring broken medicine bottles off a salver of condemned oil-cloth. In the early morn, he would not sally forth in quest of the destroying G. Cocktail to brace him up, but would sneak into the pantry and surreptitiously eat an apple-pie. This would be but a preliminary performance, for, at his regular matutinal meal, he would eat another pie, and then take one out in the woods for his lunch.

Finally his father came to an untimely end, by offering a rural editor about two pounds of "There was a young man of Skeneateles" verse in person, and his mother shortly after followed through grief. Then the lawyers stepped in, and there was lots of litigation, and after the probate snap, Philip was broke, and came to New York.

He soon foun'! employment in a baker shop, where he devoured pies while his employer was not looking. One day he was caught, and he left that place as rapidly as a bank president leaves for Europe, when sickness sets in on him.

Now we come on with our little woman's gentle influence. The baker had a daughter—a blue-eyed, yearning gazelle—and she was gone on Philip with a gone ness that oceans could not cool. And she sought her father and reasoned with him, but he would not hear her. He was stern and relentless, and laughed a mocking laugh at her argument. She often took Philip pies under her apron to keep him alive; and finally one night they eloped, and took the contents of the till, and forged checks and got all the old man's money. They were captured out West, and tried for forgery; but both worked the insanity dodge, and proved that they were straight, solid cranks from the word go. And after their acquittal they started a baker shop on their own hook, and now, to his great delight, life to him is one grand, lovely pie.

*The only reason why this story did not get the first prize is that it is not a Christmas story.

ED. PUCK.

A SEASONABLE LONGING.

Oh, to be a salamander,

In the middle of a fire,

Jack McFrost doth raise my dander,

Santa Claus excites my ire.

Oh, to be that ancient trio

In the furnace seven times hot;

Or on charts unknown to Guyot,

Lands to find where snow is not!

Oh, to be a mustard-plaster

Burning on a burning chest,

But to be a pepper-castor,

Would, upon the whole, be best.

Puckeyings.

A GLOOMY AND FUNERAL CHRISTMAS TO ALL. HA! HA!

ACCORDING to statistics, 7,117,039 ladies' stockings have been imported from Chicago for use in New York this Christmas.

MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY are not repeating their triumphs in England. For the sake of America, we deeply regret to hear it.

WHATEVER ANYONE else may get in his Christmas stocking, we can swear to having a fine, well-developed case of chilblains in ours.

EX-SENATOR CONKLING is like a boa-constrictor. After having swallowed and digested his defeat, he is now lying torpid for the winter.

A NEW PLAY is called "The Upright Man." It is only a play, and the hero is neither a city alderman nor the president of a gas company.

GENERAL SICKLES ought not to have burnt gas while he was in Europe, although he could not well have taken the meter with him. It went by itself.

CANNOT SOME giant mind invent a snow shovel that will fold up and look like an umbrella, when a man is caught at work in front of a house by a passing friend?

In PHILADELPHIA a blind man of 50 has married a girl of 14. There is nothing remarkable in this, for most men who get married are blind, although the majority of the wives are over 14.

DO YOU think that the celluloid collar-button your girl gave you for a Christmas present, together with her affection, repays you for the diamond bracelet that you sent her from Tiffany's?

WHAT WE want to know is, by what right General Sickles went abroad, when the Manhattan Company had gas ready-made for him all the time? Gas companies cannot afford to be defrauded in this way.

SHALL I DINE on Christmas day with Mayor Grace, or with W. W. Astor, or with William H. Vanderbilt, or work the free-lunch route? I think the free lunch will be the best thing after all, as I have not yet received the other invitations to dinner.

IT APPEARS that the real ancient sea-serpents had enormous tusks, as proved by the remains in the Marlboro marl pit. Next summer new ingredients will have to be used for the adulteration of whiskey at seaside resorts, in order to keep pace with the latest discoveries in serpentology.

WHAT THE CITIZENS of New York owe to the Manhattan Gas Company will never be known until that organization sends in its bills. Just to think, now, that it has been making us a present, for years, of more gas than we have consumed! "Charity begins at the Manhattan Gas Company," saith Vice-President Carpenter.

THE DAUGHTER of a merchant in Louisville ran away from home and became a domestic servant because her father refused to buy her a sealskin sacque. If some New York fathers would refuse their sons the shekels to indulge in polo and solitaire studs, the arts of car-conducting and boot-shining might perhaps be better cultivated.

CHANSON DU GRAND COCHER.

Oh, I likes to drive, when I don't get mussed,
On a summy day afore it's dark,
For them's the times for the upper-crust
To show off their trotters in Central Park.
Then I gets myself up in grand display,
With my gold-band hat and my swell-swell coat,
And my newest gloves, for fine array—
Oh, I'm the scrumptious nob to note!
I handles the lines most skillfully,
(Though I says it myself, as I should not,)
And sets like the statoo of Bill* you see
By the western gate, on the grassy plot.
My Lady de Shoddee looks at me,
(In course I knows it, though I don't look 'round,)
And thinks we're the swellest company
Of the whole "concore" on the driving-ground.
There's them as is allers wishing more,
And some as is proud to be called "M. C.";
But, as for me, there is naught in store
So grand as—"The Coachman of de Shoddee!"

RETTOF.

*A Shaksperian allusion.

MR. CMITH'S CLOCK.

Mr. John Cmith, with a large, clumsy bundle, walked aboard a ferryboat, one day last week, and took a seat in the ladies' cabin. The bundle contained an eight-pound bronze clock, which the owner was bringing to the city for repairs. The clock was not thoroughly disorganized and used up, but had got into the odd habit of striking every few minutes. Sometimes it would strike fifty or sixty without stopping. This became very monotonous, after it had been going on a few weeks, and the wife of its owner declared it ought to be fixed, as it often woke her up at night and disturbed her reveries in the day.

Furthermore, she was obliged to put it in the cellar under a barrel in the daytime while the baby was asleep, and it was a greater annoyance to her than her husband's daily lecture on domestic extravagance and the enormity of soliciting a new evening dress every month or so. After a while it got so that she used the clock as a means of defense, and a dialogue, something like the following, was of almost daily occurrence:

"Why don't you have the windows washed?"
"Why don't you have the clock fixed?"

"Here I have come home from a hard day's work, and find nothing but a cold dinner."

"I can't help that. I spent the day trying to keep the clock still."

"No; I can't afford to take you to the opera—it costs too much; you are always on the strike."

"So is the clock!"

"Would you like to take a walk this evening?"

"Yes; anything to get away from the clock."

One evening he came home in a very bad humor, and, while dining, glanced around to see that everything was calm, and proceeded:

"I heard a good riddle to-day: What is it that runs without being wound up?"

This was to her a supreme moment. With an expression of joy that completely covered her features, she screamed:

"The clock!"

"No," he replied, quietly: "A woman's tongue!"

! ? ! ? — ! ! ? ? ! ! ! ! !

* It was on the following morning that Mr. John Cmith walked aboard the ferryboat "Natchez" with the clock under his arm, as narrated above. A few moments after he took his seat in the cabin, a number of ladies and children walked in, and when they were seated the clock started in with a little run of seventeen.

Mr. Cmith is naturally of a retiring disposition, and, when every eye in the place was riveted upon him, he felt as though he would

like to sink through the deck, but he looked straight ahead, as though nothing had happened.

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14," said the clock.

Then a little girl asked her mother if that man was Santa Claus, and Mr. Cmth ground his teeth together in an ecstasy of ineffable rage. He felt as though he would like to slam the time-piece down and jump on it, and call it names, and smash it up with an axe. He vowed that he would never act as an ambassador again, and the things he thought about his wife were not what they should have been. Suddenly he felt the pulse of the clock begin to rumble, as though it wanted a little more exercise. The blood shot to his face, and then the clock proceeded:

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16."

"It seems to me you get lots of time out of that clock," remarked a stranger.

"I do," responded Mr. Cmth, with a wan smile, and a great attempt to appear facetious: "I do get lots of time out of this chronometer, and that's the great charm about it. The average clock that goes properly and regularly strikes, in the aggregate, seventy-eight times per diem. My clock often strikes as many times as that in twenty minutes."

"Do you always carry it around?"

"Not always; I'm just taking it to the clock-maker."

"To have it stopped?"

"Not at all; it can't be stopped without being destroyed. I am taking it over to have its striking power increased. When it strikes one hundred times per minute I shall be satisfied. It has a sweet, mellow sound, that amuses the baby and eclipses an orchestrion. I call it the joy of the household."

At this instant the clock broke in with its little:

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10."

"Tis false," remarked a gushful guy, pointing at the clock: "it is only half-past eight."

At this juncture all the people commenced to laugh with great gusto, and Mr. Cmth, blushing to the roots of his hair, left the cabin and went over to the opposite side of the boat set apart for gentlemen, or, in ferryboat phraseology, "gents."

As he opened the door the clock stopped striking at one hundred and fifty, and the owner thought it would take a decent rest. He found a seat, and looked straight ahead out of the window with a fixed stare which he intended to try and preserve in case the clock started in with its copper and brass chimes.

Comfortably seated beside a man with a bulldog, he commenced to converse with him on the reigning topics, but was still prepared to look stern and unconcerned when the clock should begin its work.

During this conversation the clock kept still, and Mr. Cmth felt pretty good, especially when a string-band of peripatetic Italians came in and filled the air with a vile rendition of one of Chopin's polonaises, or dolmans, or something of the kind, because he thought the music would drown the striking of the clock.

But the clock didn't feel quite certain of the music's power to silence it, and it determined to put the thing to the test; so it braced itself for a grand effort, and then stole forth upon the smoky air:

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20."

It struck a great many more times than would be proper or necessary to record, and it was also heard above the music most positively and distinctly.

As soon as it commenced Mr. Cmth looked straight ahead, but hammered on the clock as though to intimidate and frighten it into abject silence.

This only seemed to wake it up to a greater realization of its duty, and it redoubled its efforts, striking as rapidly as a telegraphic instrument, and rattling on as merrily as a drum solo.

This sudden outburst caused every one to look around, and the bulldog was thrown into a paroxysm of fright which caused him to forget everything else but his personal safety; so he sprang through the crowd, upsetting an old man and causing the wildest kind of an uproar from one end of the cabin to the other. If the clock had been fastened to his tail he would not have traveled faster, for it would probably have held him back some. However, he made splendid time until he got tangled up in the strings of the harp, which caused the player to make a kick at him, and the dog to respond by tearing the back out of the musician's coat and running out on the front deck to pick his teeth.

Mr. Cmth got right out on the stern deck, where there were not so many people, and when the door closed behind him the clock had settled down to an easy thirty-two to the minute strike.

"Whoa!" screamed Mr. Cmth, wildly, as he fetched the clock one across the face.

"Were you addressing my horse?" demanded a drayman, whose quadruped seemed frightened.

"No; I was yelling at my clock to make it stop."

"If you yell at your clock to make it stop, I suppose you use a whip to make it go?"

"No, I don't; but I can't make it stop. It has struck almost a thousand since it began, five minutes ago, and I don't know what to do."

"It reminds me," said the drayman, sympathetically: "of an adventure I once had. I was taking a kitten to the city in the steam-cars, and after we got started the kitten made more noise than a Democratic mass-meeting. Finally I had to take her out of the basket and put her in my ulster pocket to keep her still. She seemed to like this better, because I kept my hand on her and spoke to her occasionally. There happened to be a hole in my pocket, and the kitten crawled around in the lining and got up on my back. I didn't like this, because it was uncomfortable, but I made up my mind to stand it, as I didn't wish to disturb the kitten, and perhaps get her yowling again. She hadn't got more than half asleep, before a man came and said, 'Hello, Jones!' at the same time bringing his hand down on my back in a manner that caused the kitten to spread around like a maiden in a new spring bonnet. I shall never forget it. I have seen riots, and I have managed foreign actors, but for general picturesque wildness this excelled everything recorded in my memory."

The drayman here paused to tell his horse to keep still.

By this time the other horses became frightened and began to prance around, for the clock was still striking away as fast as it could go, while Mr. Cmth, in a lather of perspiration, wondered if he was ever going to reach land.

"You will have to go down-stairs with that infernal thing, or else throw it overboard," said a deck-hand, authoritatively.

"Then I'll go down," yelled Mr. Cmth: "I've got so far with it, and I'll go the rest of the way, if it costs me my life! I'm going to land this clock in the City and County of New York, that's what I'm going to do; and I don't ask any odds of you and your rickety old ferry company."

So Mr. Cmth went down-stairs, and felt happy because he was all alone. He sat down on the coal and meditated, and prepared a sort of Philippic to deliver to his wife that evening. He kept on with his happy reverie for some time, and seemed perfectly happy, until he was disturbed by a great commotion and loud words:

"Why did you back?" shouted the representative of the pilot.

"You ordered it."

"No, I didn't. I didn't ring the bell."

"I suppose," said the engineer: "you didn't ring for me to slack up, either, did you?"

"No, I didn't."

"But I heard the bells; so did the fireman."

"I did," said the fireman: "There they go again. Let's find them bells."

And, suiting the action to the word, the three went out and discovered Mr. Csmith hugging his clock to drown the sounds which emanated from it at the rate of about forty per minute.

"!! ?! !!!! *** !! ?? !!!!!!"

* * *

"Did you get the clock over all right, my dear?" asked Mrs. Csmith, affectionately, that evening, as her husband entered the domicile.

"!! ?! !!!! ??? * * * !!!!!"

"I don't see why you should go on in that way," replied his wife: "I had twice as much annoyance with it as you had. When will it be done, dear?"

By this time Mr. Csmith was sufficiently cooled off to speak printable English, and he responded, with a tinge of sarcasm:

"Your darling time-piece, my sweet little cuckoo, will be finished I don't know when. But I know when it is repaired I shall have it brought home by a messenger-boy, and I'll be near by to see the possible fun."

"Yes," yelled his wife: "and if you were not the meanest man alive, you would have sent it over by express, instead of making a fool and a laughing-stock of yourself by taking it the way you did. You would do anything to save a quarter, and I wish every time you refuse to spend a dollar on me you would have to go through a similar course; then I'd get enough wearing apparel to look respectable. Every woman in the place has more dresses than I, and I'm glad the clock struck till it made you sick. I wish I could strike and make you sick, then I'd have a chance for my life, you mean, miserable old — — !! ?? ***!!!"

* * *

After the tempest comes sunshine. Two hours later he took her to the circus, and they sat smilingly on the top seat and drank the reddest kind of weak lemonade, and no one who saw them took them for anything but fond lovers wandering in the fragrant ice-creamy of courtship.

It is never safe to imagine that the married people who exhibit so tenderly in public are always on the best of terms, for the tranquility which characterizes them at the circus is often a mere sunny fringe dangling from the departing clouds of such a tempest as that in which Mr. Csmith's clock played so active a part.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.

A DELICATE QUESTION OF TASTE.



TRAMP (*soliloquizing*): "I must keep my feet warm somehow, but I fear these checked uppers make me look too conspicuous!"

A CREPUSCULAR REVERY.

"Sit still, my heart, sit still."

Fair Musidora's words melted into music, and stole softly from the tapestried boudoir, where she lay on a silken couch, into the next room, which was set apart for the storage of the family hams and mackerel. She wrung her long pallid fingers, on most of which glistened jewels of fabulous worth, and looked out upon the frosted garden-beds, where lay the decaying flowers of summer, disseminating an odor that could never be palmed off as Jockey Club on a native of Hunter's Point.

"Alas," she sighed, with a look at once poetic and musical: "the year glides softly by, and it has almost entirely glid already. The tender gems of summer are strewn in the winds, annihilated like the roseate hopes of youth; the nutting-parties in the hazy woods are over, and now the snow begins to fall where once the pansy bloomed. Just one little year ago Basil proposed

to me out on the back stoop, and lighted my innocent child-life with a holy flame; and now comes Christmas, and I trust he may have the forethought to give me a sealskin sacque."

"Last year I told him I was fond of poetry, and that I shunned the prosaic, and sought consolation and rapture in the study of the beautiful. And when Christmas came, he gave me a four-dollar 'Locksley Hall,' and on New Year's he gave me a copy of 'Whistler's Reply to Ruskin'; on my birthday he sent me 'Volney's Ruins,' and on the 4th of July he presented me with 'Krik's Guide to the Turf.' And for the life of me I cannot tell how many Tompkins Square and Regicide Libraries he gave me between times.

"Mine is a quiet life, whose halcyon calm is never broken or rippled by having a caramel dropped into it. We women love candy with a love that is inscrutable, and I am only a woman. Ah me, what a grievous error I made when, beneath the trembling stars, I told confiding Basil my soul was lost in a sea of rhythmic beauty, that I couldn't walk without keeping time with the movement of 'Childe Harold,' and that I involuntarily repeated the 'Heathen Chinee' while dancing up and down the wash-board! That is what settled me for furs and jewelry; because books only cost a dollar apiece in these days, and the aristocratic diamond-wearing youth takes advantage of this, and maintains that girls should be less frivolous, and read more, so that he may escape much of the expense incidental to courtship.

"Alas! alack! ha, ha!" she caroled, as she rose from the silken divan, and smelled a jacqueminot rose that lay on the ebon escritoire: "I know what I shall do to-night when I hear Basil's large feet clatter on the stoop and loosen the shingles. I shall meet him and sing: 'The doctor says my sight is bad, and I must read no more; I shall have to leave the flowery lanes of poetry and be like other people. He says I must eat lots of candy for its saccharine properties, which are fattening; he says I must go skating for the exercise I need so much.'

"And then I'll graft in a subtle argument with a sealskin basis, and vow that if I ever grow cold toward him, may the sun stand still, the stars cease to shine, water run up-hill, bank presidents become honest, the Democrats elect their candidate for President, and all that style of impossibility.

"I shall tell him that mine is a love tempered by the fires of a boundless enthusiasm, and watered by the dews of poetic yearning; that my soul goes with his, hand in hand, through a vista of deathless flowers, where fountains of divine redolence are sprinkled on winds enriched by heavenly strains. Then I shall talk sealskin, and let him understand that I am no cheap literary mash."

R. K. M.

ONE PECULIARITY OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON.



A MONTH BEFORE CHRISTMAS—NOT A WAITER IN SIGHT.



THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS—PLenty OF THEM.

A "CHILI" RECEPTION.



CHILI:—"SAY, DOES YOUR MUDDER KNOW YOU'RE OUT?"

HIS CONTRIBUTION.

He was a very nice young man, of Boston dressing. He had just left the School of Mines, and he went out West, and settled in Dead Horse Gulch, to grow up with the town. He wore not only a shirt, but an all-round standing collar, of real celluloid, and he had a French gold scarf-pin and reversible cuffs.

These things aided him to lead rather a retired life in Dead Horse Gulch, for the populace did not crowd around him and overwhelm him with too embarrassing demonstrations of cordiality. So he was somewhat surprised when a big miner in a red shirt and trousers freckled with patches called on him one morning and said:

"Look-a-here, Mr. Tenderfoot, I'm appointed a sorter committee to wait upon you with a kinder message."

"I am glad to see you," said the young man. "You can be glad and dry at the same time, can't ye?" remarked the miner: "Well, we want you to a species of give us a lift."

"I shall be happy," began the young man, doubtfully; but the miner went on:

"We suppose you take an interest in this here settlement—that you kinder like to help the town grow up?"

"Certainly."

"And mebbe, we sorter thort, you'd be willing to give us a hand to hist the snap along—yank her a bit further towards incorporation."

"Undoubtedly."

"That's what we thort, that's what we thort. Ye're a white man, stranger. Shake! Well, here's our situation. A town ain't no sort of a town until it's got some record—some institutions see?"

"Indubitably."

"Well, now, we've had eight or ten births, and three marriages, and one baptism, and a change-of-heart, and a couple dozen trials, and a walking-match and a church-fair, and no end of dog-fights in this here town; but we ain't never had no funeral."

"No funeral?" inquired the young man, in surprise.

"No, sir, no funeral—that is to say, no real straight funeral—no regular formality snap. In the first place, ye see, there ain't been no coffins in the town till yesterday, when we got in a full

cargo from Leadville. And, stranger, we mean to inaugurate them coffins, sure's you're born."

"You doubtless know best."

"We do, cull, we do. We're a-going to have a real funeral—a funeral from Funeralville, Funeral County, Funekansaw, wayback. Real coffin—religious services—lining—plate—genuine corpse, too."

"But—"

"Jest hold on, stranger. That funeral is going to be a slap-up affair. We've got the minister, and the coffin, and the pall-bearers, and the hearse, and the horses, and the grave dug, and we want you to help us."

"I shall be most happy t' assist you," said the young man: "but I don't quite see how I can be useful. You desire me to assist the clergyman, perhaps? I have studied a little for the ministry—"

"No, sir, no," interrupted the miner: "you don't get onto this snap at all. We've got an A minister, who can work the whole racket all by himself. He don't want no assistance."

"Well, but," mildly objected the young man: "I don't see what else I can do. You seem to have everything prepared—"

"That's where you're out, stranger," the miner broke in again: "we ain't got the most important of all the props, and that's jest what we want you to contribute."

"And what is that?" inquired the young man with the celluloid collar.

"The corpse," said the miner: "and, stranger, that coffin will just fit you, and you'll make the prettiest resigned-looking corpse in the town, and it's a close call for ten sharp tomorrow morning. So long!"

And he lit out.

"ONE HAVING AUTHORITY."

BOSTON, MASS., Dec. 9, 1881.
To the Editor of PUCK—Sir:

I am much pleased with your editorial on the "Corinne Case." Having done my best to aid in forming the Mass. S. P. C. C., and not being now connected with it, I can freely say that I agree with your article, referred to in every detail. You are at liberty to use this, if you choose, of course.

Very truly,
JOHN DIXWELL, M.D.

FITZNOODLE IN AMERICA.

No. CCIII.

MRS. LANGTRY ON THE STAGE.



Ya-as, my swiends wite to me and I aw see by the newspapahs that Mrs. Langtwy, the wecent pwofessional beauty, is going to become a wegulah play actwess.

I he-ah she has al-weady made her appearance, faw the benefit of a charwity,

at the house of some old swiends of mine up the vivah—I mean the Wivah Thames—and, according to the cwitics, she acquitted herself verwy creditably in aw—I forgot the name of the dwama. I nevah do wemembah much about theatwical mattahs. I don't think it is particulahly good form for a fellow to give much attention to it, if he's not in the pwofession—shows, I think, want of pwopah balance of bwains. In fact, I could nevah undahstand why some of the fellaws in my own set, whom I do not care to mention by their patronymics, worwied themselves in paying the went of a theatah, in ordah to give some verwy ordinary actwess an opportunity of exhibiting herself in extwemely short dwesses with a wretched company. But there is weally no accounting faw the odd taste of some aw individuals.

I cahn't say that I am surpwised that the pwofessional beauty carwe-ah of Mrs. Langtwy has pwactically ended in this way. She nevah was weally one of us, and I am wathah glad that there is no longah any danger of her being confounded with wecognized arwistocwacy.

Jack says that she will now find her own social, and especially her pwofessional, level.

This pwofessional beauty twade has, at pwesent, terminated disastrously faw the beauties, and will not, I twust, be again wenewed.

Of course, Mrs. Langtwy will come to Amerwica, and there will naturwally be a gweat wush to see her. Amerwicans always do wush to see people who have been much talked about in the newspapahs, in connection with the arwistocwacy; but I don't think her beauty will cweate an extwendarwy sensation.

I aw was not especially stwuck when I was pwesented to her when I was last in Eurwope.

The fellaws, howevah, who will make wretched idiots of themselves are the membahs of two or thrwre clubs he-ah, who will bow down to the gwound and thrwow themselves at her feet, because the Prince of Wales admired her. These individuals like to pwetend to be Englishmen, when they are nothing maw than narwown-minded aw caddish Amerwicans aw.

IS NOTHING SERIOUS IN MORALITY?

The humoristic age grows apace. It has taken root and put forth its tender shoots in that most unexpected of all quarters—the railway advertisements. One would hardly expect a veritable Joe Miller to come out of N. Y. C. R., or P. R., or "B. & O."; but who can tell what may follow the initiative taken by the great and ever facetious West, as displayed on a gorgeous vari-colored hand-bill, thus:

"Tempus Fugit."

So does the

"DENVER SKIPPER"

of the

Chicago and Northwestern Railroad.

DISAPPOINTED.



OHIO:—"WELL, I DECLARE! EXPECTED MORE THAN THIS!"

Answers to the Anxious.

HASELTINE.—The best thing you can give her for Christmas is to give her up.

CONSTANT READER.—Keep on reading; but don't write. You are more of a success as a reader than you are as a poet.

E. J. W.—You don't like the Honorable Mr. Fitz-noddle, don't you? Well, that is rather a good thing than otherwise. You will never be consumed with a bitter longing for the unattainable boon of an introduction to the Honorable gentleman.

C. L. N.—The generous and amiable spirit of your communication is so thoroughly in harmony with the Christmas season that we publish the document in full.

BOSTON, Dec. 7th, 1881.

To the Editor of PUCK—Sir:

Will you please inform me how long since Col. E. Burd Grub, of New Jersey, was promoted to a generalship? (See page 215 of this week's PUCK.) I would also like to know which of your distinguished artists concocted the word *unjustest* (see page 210, 3d column). Also the word *subtile* as applied to the *sly*, *shrewd*, *cunning* Japanese? (See page 212.) Or are these typographical, orthographical or syntactical eccentricities the result of an overdose of the decoction which, you frankly confess, is your regular beverage, and which you have so cleverly illustrated (page 212)?

I cannot imagine why you should be so eager to "give yourself away" in regard to "what you drink," unless it is to cause your many readers to make all due allowance for whatever absurdities or inconsistencies they may notice in the columns of the PUCK. Perhaps, though, it may be a "shrewd, subtile, peculiar" way you have studied up to warn your friends to say, "No, thank you, I don't drink," when you ask them to "take something" out of your private "medicine chest."

I hope you will end my anxious suspense by giving me a solution of the enigma as soon as possible.

Yours in doubt,

C. L. N.

We won't leave you in doubt, C. L. N., as to your several queries:

I.—This is a small point of ornithology, or rather ornithological gastronomy, on which we confess ourselves ignorant. Write to the gentleman, yourself, and inquire.

RHYMES FOR BOOK BUYERS.

Literally Rendered from the Original (Catalogue).

- "Woman's Rights," "Owen Glendower,"
- "On the Heights," "Cometh up as a Flower."
- "Short Stories," "Fetters,"
- "Morning Glories," "Autograph Letters."
- "Life of Kit Carson," "Dross,"
- "The Country Parson," "The Mill on the Floss."
- "Six Little Cooks," "Little Prudy,"
- "Browsing Among Books," "Sermons of Moody."
- "Divided Ways," "Shiftless Folks,"
- "Who Breaks Pays," "Book of Jokes."
- "Roman Days," "Alroy,"
- "Macaulay's Lays," "That Awful Boy."
- "Terrace Roses," "A Beautiful Wretch,"
- "Ingersoll and Moses," "On the Home Stretch."
- "A Forlorn Hope," "All in the Dark,"
- "The Army Under Pope," "Certain Men of Mark."
- "Tit for Tat,"
- "A Man's a Man for a' That,"
- "Never Too Late to Mend,"
- "From John O'Groats to Land's End,"
- "Puritans and Shakers," (and)
- "Life Among the Quakers,"
- &c., &c., &c., &c.

AMUSEMENTS.

"The Passing Regiment" continues to parade before brilliant assemblages at DALY'S THEATRE.

Mary Anderson approaches New York triumphantly. She will open in "Romeo and Juliet," at BOOTH'S, January 2nd.

Mr. George B. Sims's new comedy, "Mother-in-law," is a hit, at the PARK THEATRE, and sends home its audiences in the best of humor.

The Vokes are at BOOTH'S THEATRE, with "Belles of the Kitchen," "Cousin Joe" and all the rest of it. Kate Claxton, in the "Two Orphans," will follow.

"Sharpes and Flats" is the play in which Messrs. Robson and Crane are now exhibiting themselves to the Brooklynites at HAVERLY'S BROOKLYN THEATRE.

Fritz, as personated by Mr. Emmet, is at HAVERLY'S FOURTEENTH STREET THEATRE, and the money is flowing into the treasury. The last season's erratic social performances of this gentleman are forgotten.

This is the last week of the opera at the ACADEMY OF MUSIC. Monday the final performance of "Aida" for the season took place. "Les Huguenots" was given on Wednesday, "Carmen" on Friday, and a grand sacred and miscellaneous concert, with the full strength of the company, on Sunday evening.

We believe it is either the fiftieth or the ninety-ninth performance of "Esmeralda," at the MADISON SQUARE THEATRE. Anyway, we are requested by the management to announce that at the hundredth performance a house and lot on Fifth Avenue will be presented to each visitor as a souvenir.

There is no falling off in the attendance at the STANDARD THEATRE to see "Patience." It is a work that improves, if that be possible, on acquaintance, and Mr. Lonsdale, the business manager, has a comparatively easy time of it, until, in the course of human events, this triumph of aestheticism may be withdrawn for something else, which will certainly not be during this year.

To-morrow (Thursday) evening the stage of the ACADEMY OF MUSIC will be given over to "the wiles, the woes and the willing," to quote a Yorkshire saying, of his noble lord Macbeth and his consort, Mrs. Macbeth, otherwise the Thane's wife. Mrs. J. H. Hackett will be the bright light of the entertainment, and will lend her talents to Shakspere's heroine for this occasion only. It should not be missed.

The Honorable Lewis Wingfield has not made a success with his new play, "The Bondman," at the FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE. Mr. John McCullough did his best with the character of *Cade*, but Mr. Wingfield's words were too much for him, and the whole thing fell flat. There was nothing in the drama to indicate that Mr. Wingfield has any special aptitude for either dramatic construction or character drawing. We regret the failure of the piece, as public expectation was raised to a high pitch when "The Bondman" was announced. On Monday and Tuesday last Mr. McCullough appeared in "Brutus; or, the Fall of Tarquin." To-night he plays *Othello*. On Friday, as *Virginius*, he takes a benefit.

ALLEGHENY CITY, Pa., Dec. 10th, 1881.

To the Editor of PUCK—Sir:

I pray you not take exceptions to the seemingly presumed liberty on the part of your Allegheny novitiate, whose greatest ambition is to one day be numbered among the funny writers—with a true admiration for fun, newspapers, and politics; but no love for orthodox religious doses. So now please weigh my capabilities, kind editor, for in the three attempts I have sent you a fair estimate can be summed. First, I sent a ponderous MS., "A Squire's Doings in Eight Squints," by Squire Dabbs—since which time I have changed my name to Ruff Daubs, and have fallen to strains of unmeasured verse. So now if you offer me any hope in this field of pleasure, please be kind enough to say so thro' your "Answers to the Anxious," under my new name "Ruff Daubs," for if I have to be blotted from the greatness I am seeking, let me depart with my dearly loved new title enshrining my blasted spirits. But should you say, "Lay on, McDuff," then I'd land the ox through the Mormon door; an' I'd tell stale tale ov Charities dark wail that our big churches won't C.

Very respectfully,

RUFF DAUBS.

* We think, Mr. Ruff Daubs, that you have attained the height of your ambition.

ED. PUCK.



BLAINE LEAVING THE CAPITOL.

M.D.



CAPitol.—"I GO—BUT I RETURN!"

PROBABLE.



"JIMMY, I WONDER IF I'LL EVER HAVE A MONUMENT LIKE THAT?"
"YOU MIGHT; BUT I THINK IT'D POINT IN THE OTHER DIRECTION."

THE JOSHU-A OF IT.

At Gibeon, when the sun was slow,
Declining "down the west" to go,
And Amorite stock was quoted low,
On rushed the valiant Joshu-a.

Came with him all of Israel's might,
With swords and lances gleaming bright,
Just spoiling for a good old fight,
All bound to slash and swash away.

But Gibeon saw another sight:
The moon came out upon the right,
And helped the sun to make it light
Enough to fight at Ajalon.

They'd scared you with the racket made
In this unprecedent raid,
When horses neighed and donkeys brayed,
If Joshu-a had had you 'long.

The sun, by some uncommon quirk,
Its daily journey seemed to shirk;
In fact, the old thing wouldn't work—
Stood taking in the scenery!

Some of its wheels got out of gear,
No grease on hand the cogs to smear;
The screws were rusty—something queer
About the whole machinery.

The moon, too, had a lousy fit,
Refusing to "roll on" a whit;
Serenely in the clouds she'd sit
And wink toward the Amorite.

Then Joshu-a puts in a claim:
"I fixed this business all the same—
My little military game
To scoop them fellers! Am I right?"

No bill for gas was there to pay.
Had Joshu-a not stopped to pray,
And t'other army run away,
The story had been classic-er;

Still, one may reckon it as quite
A scrumptious, though one-sided fight,
And may regard it in the light
Of—something of a massacre!

When first-class miracles belong
To generals, they help along
An army, whether right or wrong;
With sun and moon, then, can't he
Win all his fights? It fetches things!
Such wonders help in other things,
As, holding in his hand "five kings,"
When Josh played "dollar ante."

SLOWCUS.

LITERARY NOTES.

We know Christmas is coming along, because Messrs. Porter & Coates have published two handsomely-bound and illustrated books, containing respectively "The Bells" and "The Cotter's Saturday Night." We will not call in question the intelligence of our readers by giving the names of the authors.

"Tutti-Frutti" is one of the prettiest books of child songs we have seen for many a day. Laura Ledyard and W. T. Peters are responsible for the poetry, which is exquisitely illustrated by W. Clinton Peters. Mirth, jollity and refinement are exhibited throughout this charming work. George W. Harlan, of 19 Park Place, is the publisher.

The latest number of *The Town* has induced us to alter our opinion regarding this publication. It is a solitaire stud superfluity, and demoralizing at that. The Honorable Francis Fitznoodle has told us that there is no society in New York, and no one on this continent is more competent to judge. What, then, do we want of a paper the avowed purpose of which is to chronicle the movements and doings of a parcel of silly people, whose only claim to notoriety lies in their having more money and impudence than their neighbors? We have no objection to these persons enjoying one another's company, but we can assure them that their proceedings, as reported in or out of *The Town*, are of no interest to the world at large. Let the circulation of *The Town*, if it must exist, be confined solely to the male and female noddles it mentions in its columns, and it will then have the distinction of numbering among its readers the largest number of idiots in the community. We will, however, do *The Town* the justice to say that the editor appears to know something of the social life of the "fashionables" of whom he writes.

MARRIED MISERIES.

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR PUCK, BY ARTHUR LOT.

No. XXIII.—Our New China.

I am not rich, and I am not extraordinarily poor; I am simply a member of the class which they describe as people in comfortable circumstances. My income is sufficient for moderate wants, and even for a dash of luxury, but will not stand the wear and tear of extravagance. I don't object to buying new things, but I do ask that, when they are bought, they shall be compelled to last a good while. Keeping house is an expensive luxury; so is (I say this with tears in my eyes) a wife; so is a boy. I have already experienced the miseries of several Christmases, and have wished that Santa Claus had had the measles when he was young, and there hadn't been a doctor within fourteen hundred miles of his paternal's mansion; but Christmas presents are not my only affliction. Mrs. Lot is very hard on clothes; not that she wears out so many, but that she has an inordinate hankering after the most fashionable kind. And the boy is terrible on clothes. I found him using the sleeves of the last new jacket which I bought him, on the first day he wore it, to rub out chalk-marks with. Of course I enforced the scriptural doctrine: "Spare the rod, spoil the child;" but what's the use? Suppose I do polish him off, boys still will be boys, and wives must have false curls and such things. There is only one thing in the boy's character over which I mourn: he is greedy. On Christmas eve I found him measuring Georgie's and Mrs. Lot's stockings, in order to discover which was the bigger.

And then the food which is consumed in a house is something startling. Mrs. Lot is a terribly healthy woman, with an appetite that would astonish a farmer's household; and the boy is growing, but not fast enough to catch up with his appetite. And our Bridget! Mercy, what a capacity for tucking away victuals that girl possesses! I've heard of a man named Jonah, who swallowed a whale; (or was he swallowed by one?) but, bless you, a whale wouldn't be a decent dessert for our Bridget! Now, I don't in the least object to furnishing the food for those people, but I do think that, when I furnish unlimited quantities of mutton, etc., my family should not be extra particular as to the kind of china off of which the mutton, etc., is to be eaten. And I don't in the least think that I am unreasonable in insisting that the style or age of the china has nothing to do with the quality of the mutton, etc.

When I was united in the holy bonds of wedlock to Mrs. Lot, my mother-in-law presented to me a set of china which, I honestly believe, her mother-in-law had presented to her. I don't care to trace its history through its successive owners, but it was as old-fashioned as—well, as old-fashioned as—anyhow, Noah must have used it in the ark. It had disgusting pictures of pheasants and such birds painted on it. Disgusting, I say, for how can a man enjoy corned-beef when it is on a dish which has a fat partridge painted on it? or how can he endure molasses on his griddle-cakes when, right underneath the molasses, is a representation of bees industriously gathering honey? I well remember the speech my mother-in-law made when she presented the aforesaid old china to me.

"My dear Arty," said she (I was christened Arthur, and hate to be called Arty, especially by my mother-in-law): "here is a set of china which has been in our family for a number of years." (Then she said something about heirlooms, which, I have discovered, are things of no earthly value to anybody.) "I dislike very much to part with it; but as it's you—"

My mother-in-law and I, in those days, used

to pretend that we were uncommonly fond of each other, so I added a word or two.

"Yes," said I: "as it is I."

I may add that my mother-in-law had been very anxious for some years to purchase a new set, but she knew that my father-in-law would not allow her to do so while she possessed that old trumpery.

"I can't bear," said she: "to allow dear Kate to leave, unless she takes something to remember me by."

Then she blubbered, and, I believe, I welled over.

"Take them, Arty," added she: "and take my bl-bl-blessing."

I took them, as a matter of course; but when I told Mrs. Lot about her mother's speech, that clear-sighted little woman simply said:

"Humbug!"

That old china we tucked away in a closet, and we left it there. We never brought it out, except when my mother-in-law visited us, and then we stuffed her with her horrible old pheasants and partridges and bees. The new set, which I bought, lasted some years, and about two years ago I purchased a really magnificent set, as I thought, though I must admit that I have never found Mrs. Lot anxious to brag about it. But then, you know, tastes will differ. There must have been some one, I suppose, who liked the pheasant and bee set.

Unfortunately, as I have herein related, we attended a party at our next-door neighbor's house. Confound that party! I really believe our next-door neighbor's wife gave that *soirée* simply to show a new set of china which her husband had given to her. After we reached our home, I heard nothing but remarks about china, new china, our next door neighbor's china. Mrs. Lot was full of china, Georgie was full of china—that is to say, their heads were full of china. I felt that the storm was gathering, and endeavored to drive my family to bed; but it could not be done. They insisted that everybody should warm his and her toes before we retired. We sat down to warm our toes, and then the storm burst.

"Mr. Lot," said my wife: "we really ought to have a new set of china. When I saw our neighbor's china, I thought how mean our old stuff would look beside it."

Georgie did not open her mouth, but I could see that she was eagerly awaiting my answer.

"But, my dear," said I: "I really can't, now. Perhaps next year we may be able."

"Oh, you can, if you want to," said she: "you know you can."

"Really, my dear," said I: "there is no use in talking about it. I haven't the money."

"You have it," said she: "if you want to use it in that way."

"No, my dear," said I, quite mildly.

Then the full fury of the storm came on.

"Don't my dear me. You're good enough at talking when I don't want anything; but when I do, you never have the money. Oh, no, you haven't the money! A paltry set of china, too! You don't experience any difficulty in finding money when you want anything. You can pay for your club, and your billiards, and your little suppers, but not for a paltry lot of china! Oh, dear, no!"

That woman should certainly have been an actress.

"But, my dear—"

"Don't my dear me! Don't speak to me! I'm going to bed," and off she flounced.

Mrs. Lot has a way of flouncing around and whisking her dress which is at once dangerous and aggravating. Georgie looked at me sorrowfully, and then followed Mrs. Lot up-stairs. I thought over the matter before I retired, and, though I knew that the china must be bought, I resolved to wait for developments.

During the following day Mrs. Lot was as

cool, calm and collected as a well-pickled cucumber. From the manner in which she treated me, you would have imagined that I was some poor boot-black, whom she was taking care of out of charity, or some half-orphan asylum, which she intended to remember in her will. In the evening, I found my mother-in-law on hand, and I very soon discovered that Mrs. Lot had been confidential with my mother-in-law about the china. Mrs. Lot was still cucumberish, while Georgie was uncomfortable and half frightened. I saw that the clouds were gathering around me thicker and darker, but I preserved my mental equilibrium. Presently, on the first convenient opportunity, my mother-in-law started to take me in hand. Now, if there is anything I particularly dislike, it is to be taken in hand by my mother-in-law. What business was it of hers whether we had new china or not? I resolved that, if she aggravated me much, I would bring in her old pheasants and bees, pile them in a heap on the floor, and sit on them.

"My dear Arty," began she.

"Now, my dear mother-in-law," interrupted I: "if you propose to talk china to me, I won't listen to you. I have made up my mind to—"

"To purchase it?" interrupted she.

"To think about it," replied I.

Then she went over to the other females. I was pretending to read the paper, but I was really watching my womenfolk. Presently I saw Mrs. Lot nudge Georgie.

"Mr. Lot," said Georgie, in a timid tone.

"Well, Georgie?" inquired I.

"Are you really going to purchase the china?" asked she, as if frightened at what she was doing.

"I am going to think about it, Georgie."

I glanced at Mrs. Lot, and I saw by the smile which played around her mouth that she felt that she had won her point. Bless me, if she wasn't as good-natured as a kitten; butter wouldn't have melted in her mouth. Nothing more was said about the china during the evening, and we once more became a family. Just before we retired, Georgie came to me and whispered:

"I really thought that you had quarreled."

"Oh, dear, no, Georgie," said I: "that is only a specimen of the way in which women now rule the world."

"Do all married people act so?" inquired she.

"It is to be presumed so," said I.

"Well," said she: "Tom and I never will—never."

"Never is a long period, my dear Georgie."

"Never!" cried she, running away.

I had made up my mind to buy a choice set of Bulwer's works, and I had half promised to join a wine party at Bousaintaur's; but I concluded that both of those things, which were really necessities, must be given up, and the china, an absolutely unnecessary set of useless articles, must be bought. Peace in the household must be purchased, let the price be what it may. Accordingly, I requested Mrs. Lot to go and select the crockery, and to have the bill sent to me.

"Oh, that is so nice; and now we can give a party," said she.

"Yes," chimed in Georgie: "we can give a party like our neighbor's."

Even my mother-in-law was in favor of a party; but then, mothers-in-law always are in favor of parties.

I had expected this, and therefore I said nothing. What's the use? After you have surrendered the fortress, it is childish to squabble about the outworks. The boy was quite interested in the party question, and I heard him mutter:

"Won't I steal the raisins, that's all?"

The china was brought home in the evening, and I directed the man to bring the basket in which it was packed into the parlor. I took

off the coverings in the presence of the whole household. The air resounded with exclamations. Beautifuls, splendids, isn't it gorgeouses and such expressions could have been picked up in that room by the basketful. Mrs. Lot was delighted, Georgie was delighted, and my mother-in-law was delighted, and I'm half inclined to think that I was delighted myself. After we had sufficiently admired it, Bridget was directed by Mrs. Lot to bring a tray and carry the crockery away. Bridget brought an immense tray, and piled every dish upon it before Mrs. Lot observed her performances.

"But, Bridget," said Mrs. Lot: "I did not mean that you should carry them all at once. Do you think you can carry that load?"

"With aise, mum," replied Bridget.

Mrs. Lot, in a polite manner, insinuated that she'd break the girl's neck if she broke a piece, and Bridget started with her load. Now, whether it was that she was dazed by the brilliancy of the crockery, or whether some inequality of the carpet made her stumble, I can't say, but she certainly did fall and did manage to smash the crockery to smithereens.

I looked at Mrs. Lot. For once in her life that estimable lady was struck dumb; for once that tongue, which had never been quiet, ceased to wag. She turned very pale. I did not console with her, for I knew that the storm must come, and I did not want it to break on my head. As I watched her, I saw the color gradually return to her face. Suddenly she regained her powers of speech, and burst forth.

"You lazy, ignorant thing!" cried she: "Couldn't you carry that china without smashing it? Couldn't you cross the room without treading on your nose? Go! Get your things and go. I don't want you here another day!"

Bridget left the room, and Mrs. Lot subsided into tears.

Poor woman, what could I say to her? There is absolutely nothing to say under such circumstances, and I concluded that I had better confine my remarks to that. But I chuckled—in my sleeve, of course—when I reflected that the party had been knocked in the head. Broken china is not the thing for a first-class entertainment. I felt sorry for the boy, though. Poor boy! His chance of hooking the raisins fled when Bridget fell. China is a word that is never pronounced in our house, now. The old stuff still adorns our table, and I am waiting, with all the patience of a government pensioner, for another attack of the china fever. However, I beg of you, if you should happen to meet my better-half—don't mention china to her.

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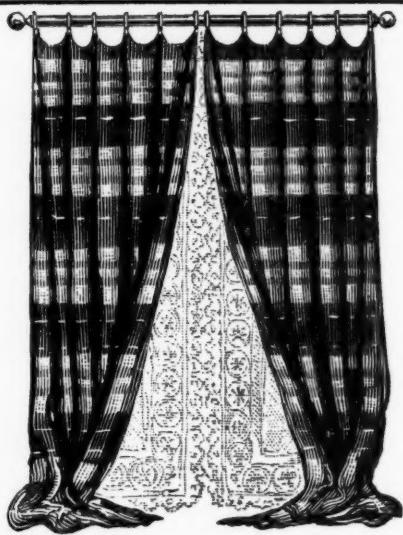
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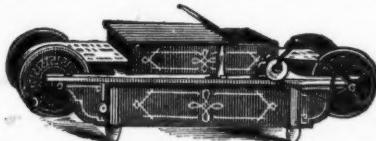
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Where warmth and whiteness seemed to meet—
I made her blush and made her pout,
And watched her wring the linen out.
Oh, to meet her in the valley!
Snatch her hand, and call her Sally!
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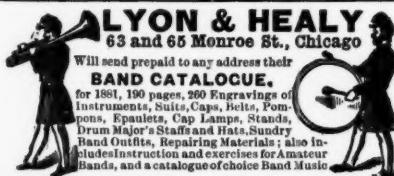


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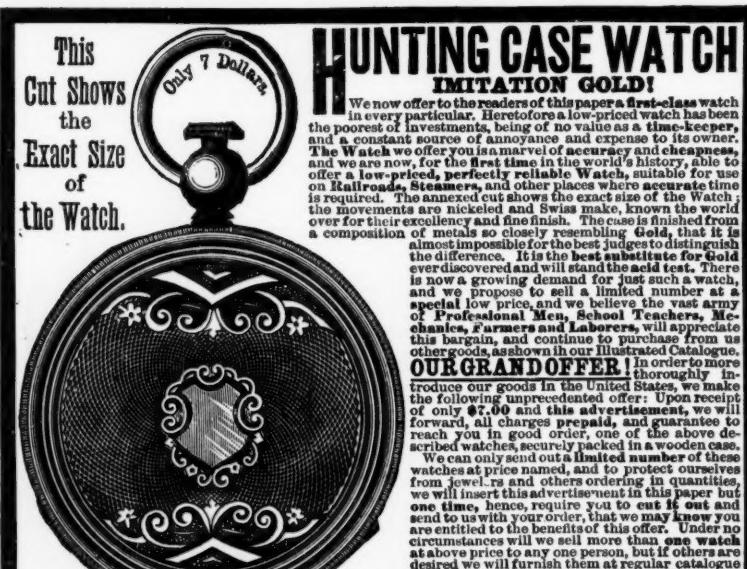
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THE missionaries in China refuse to admit converts to church-membership unless they give up opium-smoking. We never heard of the question being asked a convert here at home whether he smoked opium, drank whiskey or chewed plug tobacco. But maybe there is something in the revised edition that prohibits opium-smoking.—*Peck's Sun.*

HIRAM GREEN, Esq., was lugging up coal, when he stubbed his toe and fell, causing him to accidentally let slip a cuss-word. “Hain’t you ‘shamed of yourself! Where do you expect you’ll go to when you die?” asked his wife. “To a place where I shan’t have to lug coal, by thunder!” and the lait justiss continued on.—*Whitehall Times.*

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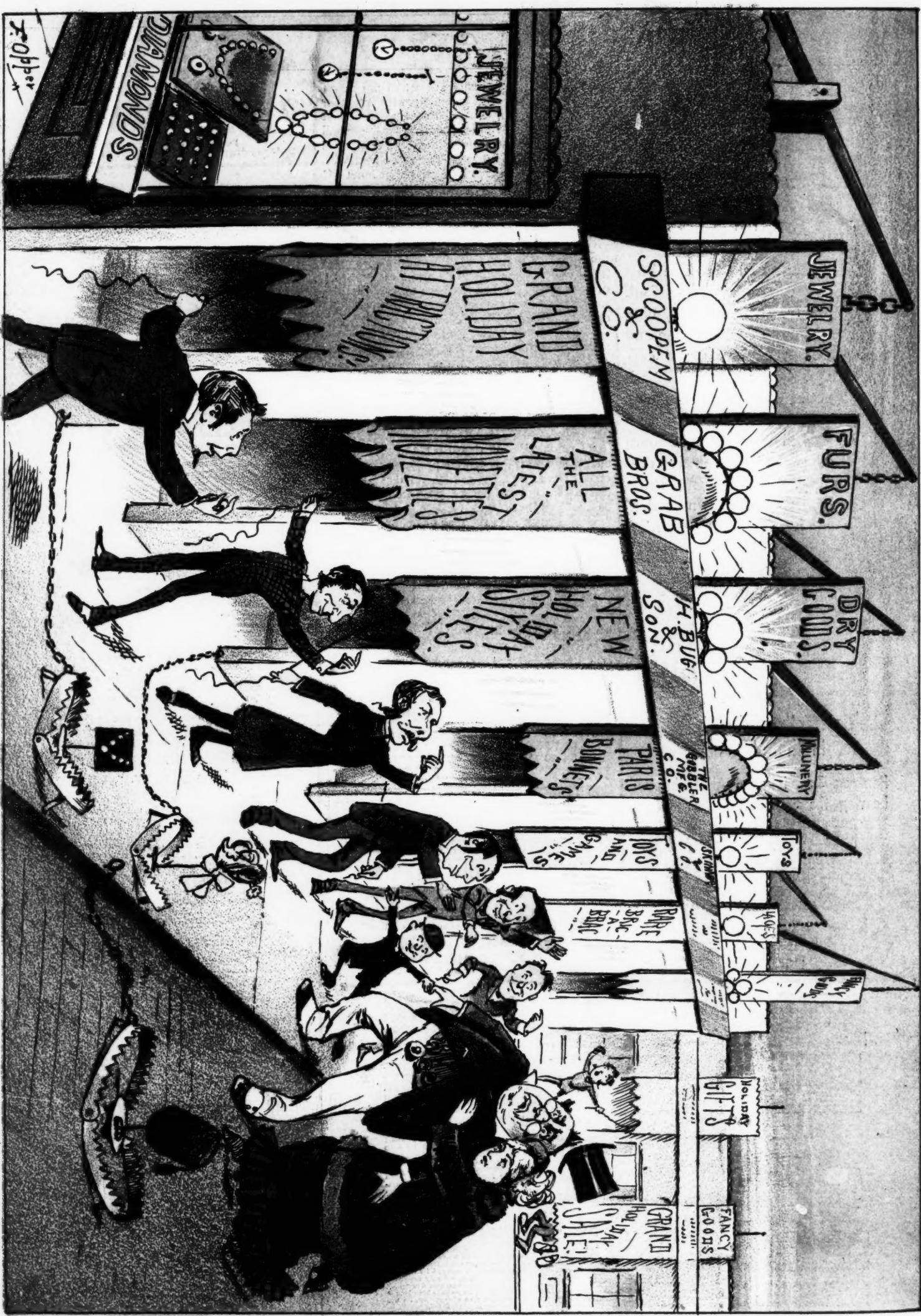
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